

Chairman Mike Gallagher (R-WI) Opening Remarks

January 30, 2024

On the eve of the most recent Russian invasion of Ukraine, Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping proclaimed that friendship between Russia and China “has no limits” and that there were “no forbidden areas of cooperation between them.”

Two years later, these aggressors are closer than ever, and, worse yet, are even bringing Iran and North Korea into the fold, while covering for Hamas and its campaign of terror against Israel.

The CCP has become a prime banker and supplier to Russia’s war on Ukraine, and the number one purchaser of Iranian crude, single-handedly neutering America’s sanction regime against its top two targets.

Russia uses Iranian drones and ammunition to kill Ukrainians. Putin is poised to purchase Iranian ballistic missiles, while North Korea has delivered over 1,000 containers of military equipment to assist the Russian war effort.

China, Russia, and North Korea send weapons, in some cases through intermediaries, to Hamas and other Iranian backed groups, to include drones.

Drones are used by Iranian-backed militias to attack American military installations in Iraq, Syria, and this past weekend in Jordan, killing three American soldiers and wounding dozens more.

These aligned authoritarians increasingly train and exercise together—and they support the respective crowbars being driven into the cracks of the global order: Ukraine, Taiwan, and on Oct 7th.

What was once a smattering of rogue authoritarians causing trouble today looks a whole lot like an axis led by the Chinese Communist Party. Xi, Putin, Ayatollah Khamenei, Kim Jong Un, and Hamas.

Authoritarians aligned against us. Not as distinct problems, but as different faces of a core, violent impulse against the United States, our allies, and our values.

Famously, Churchill called the period of German rearmament and alliance building the gathering storm. Today, the storm gathers once more, and as we watch China undertake the largest military buildup since the Second World War and find eager friends in Tehran, Moscow, and Pyongyang, we should reflect on the lessons of history.

Problems do not age well. We ignore them at our peril. Appeasement and an over-reliance on polite diplomacy cannot save us. We must act decisively to enhance our military strength, support our allies, and deter this authoritarian alignment. Only strength will be able to withstand the storm.